COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

BY-LAWS & STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

AS ADOPTED BY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

JUNE 8, 1986

AND LAST AMENDED JANUARY 10, 1993

ARTICLE I. NAME

A. The name of this Church shall be the COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH.

B. This Church shall be affiliated with the UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES (hereinafter called UFMCC).

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The objective of this Church shall be:

A. To share in the worship of God in the Christian tradition and to make God's will dominant in the lives of all people, individually and collectively, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures; and

B. To do all things that are compatible with the work of a Christian Church.

ARTICLE III. DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS, AND RITES

A. DOCTRINE: Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Christian Church in every age and in every land.

In the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, this Church, as an affiliated local Church in UFMCC, moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene.

"Statement of Faith"

We believe:

1. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God—our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit—God as our Sustainer.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus ... the Christ ... historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

7. This Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services to worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

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MISSION STATMENT

WE EXIST TO:

CELEBRATE THE LOVE OF GOD

Through awareness of and response to God's presence.
Through communion with and commitment to Jesus Christ.
Through oneness and praise in the Holy Spirit.

CULTIVATE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD

Through the study of God's Word.
Through application of Christ's teachings to our lives.
Through growth and development as a community of Christians.

CARE ABOUT ONE ANOTHER IN CHRIST

Through sharing one another's joys, growth, and needs.
Through recognition, development, and use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in each person.
Through prayer, service, and sacrifice to meet each other's needs.

COMMUNICATE CHRIST TO ALL PEOPLE

Through sharing the good news of God's all-inclusive love and acceptance.
Through letting others see Jesus in us.
Through discipling, by celebration, nurturing, and caring.

B. SACRAMENTS: This Church embraces two holy Sacraments:

1. BAPTISM by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is identified as God's own Child.

2. HOLY COMMUNION is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with the words of Jesus, our Sovereign: "This is my body ... this is my blood." (Matthew 26:26-28). All who believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received into community with Jesus Christ, to be saved by Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus Christ's resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to the service of Jesus Christ.

C. RITES: The Rites of this Church as performed by its duly authorized ministers shall consist of the following:

1. The RITE OF ORDINATION is the setting apart of duly qualified persons for the professional ministry of this Church. It is evidenced by the laying on of hands by authorized ordained clergy, pursuant to the By-Laws of UFMCC.

2. The RITE OF ATTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH shall be conducted by the pastor before a congregation at any regular worship service. After completing classes for instruction in the beliefs and doctrines of the Church, a baptized Christian may become a member in good standing of this Church through a letter of transfer from a recognized Christian body or through an affirmation of faith.

3. The RITE OF HOLY UNION and the RITE OF HOLY MATRIMONY are the spiritual joining of two persons in a manner fitting and proper by a duly authorized clergy of the Church. After both persons have been counseled and apprised of their responsibilities one towards the other, this rite of conferring God's blessing may be performed.

4. The RITE OF FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE is to be fittingly conducted by the ministers of the Church for the deceased.

5. The RITE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS or prayer for the healing of the sick in mind, body or spirit is to be conducted by the ministers of the Church, at their discretion, upon request.

6. The RITE OF BLESSING may be conducted by the ministers of the Church for persons, things and relationships, when deemed appropriate by the minister. This includes the dedication of a church building to the glory of God.

ARTICLE IV. MINISTRY

UFMCC affirms the universal priesthood of all believers (I Peter 2:5-10). All members of this Church are called by God to a ministry of the Gospel of Christ in this Church and in the world.

A. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY:

1. The Priesthood of All Believers: Laypeople are the People of God, called by God and authorized by Scripture to respond to the Word, serving as Christ served, to the end that the Church may be edified and the world transformed.

2. DEACONS: As outlined in the New Testament, their office is an historic ministry of service and aid within the Christian Church. It is a two-fold ministry--one consisting of direct ministry to persons; the other dealing with Church implements and the serving of Rites and Sacraments.

a. QUALIFICATIONS: Deacons shall be members in good standing and be persons of spiritual mind, exemplary lives, joyful outlook, sound judgement, and of proven dedicated service.

b. RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with the spiritual responsibilities of the office, and, under the authorization and direction of their appointing authority, deacons minister to those in need, the sick, the friendless, and those persons who may be in distress, and may serve and administer the Rites and Sacraments.

c. APPOINTMENTS: All persons appointed deacons by the pastor are subject to approval by both the District Coordinator and the Board of Directors. (Commissioned Church Status)

d. TRAINING: Training, in compliance with District directives, before and after the appointment of deacons, is responsibility of the appointing authority and may be delegated.

e. DISCIPLINE: A deacon may be disciplined for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or the dereliction of duty. For cause, the appointing authority may suspend a deacon from the exercise of a deacon's duties for a period of not more than thirty (30) days, and must report that suspension and the reasons for it to the approving authorities. The appointing authority, together with the approval of the majority of the full Board of Directors, and with the approval of the District Coordinator, may for cause remove a deacon from office or impose lesser discipline. (Commissioned Church Status)

f. DISTRICT WORKS: If the need arises, deacons are available at the request of the District Coordinator to serve for district work. This request is subject to the approval of the pastor and the District Committee.

B. MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY:

1. CLERGY: Clergy are members of the People of God, called by God, authorized and legally recognized by UFMCC to serve among the people as professional ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

a. QUALIFICATIONS: Clergy are those persons of professed and demonstrated call to be professional Christian ministers who meet the qualifications established by the Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee (hereinafter called the CCCC) of the UFMCC. These qualifications are subject to the approval of the General Conference.

b. RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with their call, clergy shall administer Rites and Sacraments of UFMCC and be teachers and preachers of the faith to the end that the world may believe and the Church might be renewed, equipped and strengthened to its ministry.

c. CREDENTIALS: In accordance with procedures and standards established by the CCCC and subject to the approval of General Conference, credentials as clergy are issued either on a lifetime basis or are subject to periodic review.

d. DISCIPLINE: Initiation of disciplinary procedure for clergy as a result of disloyalty, unbecoming conduct or dereliction of duty may only be accomplished by a formal statement of charges made by 1) a majority of the congregation of this Church, 2) a majority of the elected District Officers, or 3) three members of the clergy of UFMCC. The charges must be presented in writing to the accused clergyperson and to the appropriate Judiciary Committee appointed by UFMCC.

2. STUDENT CLERGY: Student clergy are qualified persons who feel called by God to serve among the people as professional ministers of the Word and Sacraments. For a limited time they may serve in this position to test their and to develop needed skills.

a. QUALIFICATIONS: Before being appointed student clergy, an individual must be a member in good standing within UFMCC and must have demonstrated a spiritual disposition, willingness and ability to work well with others, and must show promise of ability to do the study and work of the clergy.

b RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with their call and the test of that call, student clergy will concentrate on learning experiences. Those learning experiences shall include ministry in the Church as well as academic studies.

Student clergy may, under the authorization and direction of the appointing authority, administer the Rites and Sacraments. Except in extraordinary circumstances, student clergy shall not serve on the Board of Directors. Student clergy may serve as the pastor.

c. APPOINTMENTS: All persons appointed student clergy by the pastor are subject to approval by both the District Coordinator and the Board of Directors (Commissioned Church Status). The term of a student clergy shall be for one year. No person shall serve as a student clergy for more than a total of five terms.

d. TRAINING: The student clergy will engage in a program of spiritual and practical study as guided by the CCCC under the direction of the appointing authority and/or through any appropriate educational agency. This program may be supplemented by the District Committee or any person and/or agency appointed by the District Committee.

e. DISCIPLINE: Reasons and procedures for discipline or removal of student clergy are identical to those given in these By-Laws for deacons.

f. DISTRICT WORKS: If the need arises, the District Coordinator may request student clergy to serve for district work. This request is subject to approval of the appointing authority and the District Committee.

ARTICLE V. GOVERNMENT, ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS

A. GOVERNMENT: COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH subscribes to the government and doctrine of the UFMCC and has been authorized by the same.

B. ORGANIZATION: This Church recognizes the following bodies of government structure and authority:

1. FELLOWSHIP: Internationally, the government of UFMCC is vested in the General Conference, subject to provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation, its By-Laws, or documents of legal incorporation. Between General Conferences, the Board of Elders and the General Council are those government bodies which are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative leadership on the international Fellowship level.

2. DISTRICT: Districts are those defined bodies which are created by the General Council and are accountable to the General Conference. They are called into existence to enable and empower Christian ministry within specific geographic regions through their member congregations. District Conferences are legislative gatherings of the District to establish District By-Laws or Standard Operating Procedures for the nominations of members of the District Committee, all District Officers and for the conduct of District business. The District By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures must be in accordance with those of UFMCC.

3. COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH: The government of this Church is vested in its congregational meetings which exert the right to control all of its affairs, subject to provisions of UFMCC By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation, or documents of legal organization, General Conferences and District Conferences. The pastor and the Board of Directors are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative leadership in this Church.

C. PASTOR: The pastor is that person elected by the congregation to be responsible for the duties of teacher, preacher, spiritual leader and counselor. The pastor must be approved by the District Coordinator and District Committee. (Commissioned Church Status)

1. QUALIFICATIONS: The pastor must be credentialed clergy in the UFMCC unless an exception is made by the District Committee.

2. DUTIES: The pastor shall have the authority for ordering all worship services of the Church. The pastor shall provide for other programs of a spiritual nature including (but not limited to) Bible study, Christian education classes and retreats according to the needs of the congregation. The pastor shall provide, for prospective Church members, classes of instruction in the beliefs and doctrines of the Church. The pastor has the authority, subject to the appropriate approval, to appoint deacons of the Church and is responsible for their training, supervision and discipline. The

pastor shall schedule regular hours during which times he/she will be available for counseling appointments. The pastor shall be available for counseling at other times, unless emergency circumstances exist, at his/her discretion. The pastor is a voting member of the Board of Directors and serves as moderator of congregational meetings and meetings of the Board of Directors. The pastor shall serve as an Administrator of the Community Assistance Fund/Closet. Associate or assistant pastor(s) and other personnel, compensated or uncompensated, shall be appointed by the pastor, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. The pastor shall serve as the personnel director of the Church staff, shall have their authority to delegate such responsibilities and duties as seem wise, and shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, determine compensation, vacation periods, times off, and titles of office for the staff.

3. COMPENSATION: The pastor and the Board of Directors shall construct, by mutual consent, a contract for the services of the pastor which specifically enumerates the duties and time commitments of the pastor, the forms of compensation to be provided in exchange for those services, vacations and times-off, and the time period during which the contract is to be effective.

4. TERMINATION OF SERVICE:

a. When it is felt that irreconcilable differences exist between the pastor and congregation, the pastor, the Board of Directors or the lay delegate shall request that a ministry of reconciliation, in accorance with the Scriptures, be initiated by the District Coordinator or a person appointed by the District Coordinator. If the differences cannot be resolved, they may through mutual agreement choose to terminate their relationship.

b. The process of removing the pastor from office for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction of duty or when irreconcilable differences arise between the pastor and congregation may be initiated by: a petition submitted to the Clerk of the Board of Directors of the Church signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing, or by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the full Board of Directors. Within three (3) days the pastor, the Distict Coordinator, the World Church Extension Elder and the Senior Chaplain of Spiritual Life and Clergy Care Center must be sent a copy of the completed petition by the Clerk of the Board.

After the District Coordinator and the Clerk of the Board of the Church have validated the number of members who have signed the petition and the clarity of the petition, the District Coordinator may place the pastor on inactive status, but the pastor remains fully compensated until the final action of the congregation. Upon validating the petition, the District Coordinator and Clerk of the Board of Directors of the Church will set the time and place of a special congregational meeting. The date of the meeting shall occur within thirty (30) days of the date the petition is submitted to the Clerk of the Board. The only question to be voted on at the meeting shall be: "Shall the pastor remain in office?"

The pastor has the right to appear on his/her own behalf before the congregational meeting and may have an advocate of his/her own choosing present. The action of the congregation is final. If a special meeting is called to remove a pastor, the District Coordinator and the UFMCC Board of Elders must be given notice that such action is being taken. The District Coordinator shall attend or send a representative as an impartial observer who shall moderate the meeting. If the pastor is removed, the Board of Directors will meet immediately thereafter with the District Coordinator or the representative to provide pastoral leadership until the pulpit is filled. The Board of Directors will confer with the District Coordinator as to available candidates for the office of pastor.

D. BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

1. TERM OF OFFICE: The Board of Directors shall consist of six (6) Church members in good standing, including the Pastor. The term of office is two (2) years with the exception of the Pastor, who holds office for as long as he/she continues as pastor. Board of Directors's terms of office must be staggered. In the event of the resignation, death or removal from office of a Board member, the remaining Board members may appoint an interim Board member to serve until the next congregational meeting. In such case, at the next congregational meeting, an open election will be held to elect a replacement for the remainder of the original term of office.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY: The Board of Directors is subject to these By-Laws and is accountable to the congregation for its actions at all times. For reporting and planning purposes, each Board member is required to submit a written report at each Board meeting. Such report must outline progress made on projects or activities under his/her responsibility since the last Board meeting and discuss plans, projects, activities, etc. to be begun or accomplished prior to the next Board meeting.

3. DISCIPLINE: The Church will not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct or dereliction of duty on the part of any member of the Board of Directors. Therefore, the Board of Directors may remove, by a majority vote of the full Board, any of its members found guilty of the above, with the exception of the pastor, who must be disciplined in accordance with Article V.C.4. A petition presented to the Board of Directors and signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing of the Church may also initiate such a procedure.

Furthermore, two (2) unexcused absences from Board of Directors meetings during any calendar year will automatically be considered cause for removal from the Board. The Board of Directors must vote to determine whether an absence will be deemed excused or unexcused. However, under no circumstances may an absence be deemed excused when prior notification of the absence is not given, unless the situation is an emergency. The Clerk of the Board will notify any Board member removed under this paragraph of his/her removal in writing and such notification must include the signatures of at least two (2) other Board members.

4. TITLES: The Board of Directors will consist of the Pastor, the Treasurer, the Clerk, and three (3) At-Large Board Members. Other titles, including Vice-Moderator, and areas of responsibility will be determined by the Board of Directors at the first Board meeting immediately following the election of Board member(s). The Clerk of the Board will include a description of the titles and areas of responsibility as a part of the minutes of that meeting to be distributed to the congregation.

E. LAY DELEGATE: This Church shall have one (1) vote for every one hundred (100) members in good standing or portion thereof and shall elect one (1) lay delegate for each vote. Each lay delegate shall carry one (1) vote. The delegate(s) must be elected at the first congregational meeting following each General Conference and shall serve for a term of two (2) years. The lay delegate shall represent the congregation at General and District Conferences, be informed of UFMCC and District concerns, policies and issues, and communicate these to the congregation. The lay delegate shall solicit the concerns, opinions, etc. of congregation members individually and by special meeting(s) for such purpose for communication to UFMCC and the District. The lay delegate shall prepare written reports to the congregation and Board of Directors immediately following each General or District Conference detailing the events of the conference and their impact on the congregation. Failure of the lay delegate to attend two (2) conferences during his/her term of office shall constitute cause for removal from office. The procedure for the removal of a lay delegate shall be the same as for a member of the Board of Directors. (Article D.1.)

F. ALTERNATE LAY DELEGATE: One (1) alternate lay delegate shall be elected for each lay delegate. The terms of office of the lay delegate(s) and alternate lay delegate(s) shall be concurrent. The alternate lay delegate(s) shall serve under the guidance of the lay delegate(s) and it shall be their duty to assist the lay delegate(s) in the performance of their duties. In the event of the resignation, death, or removal of a lay delegate, the alternate lay delegate shall assume the office of lay delegate for the remainder of the term of office. The Board of Directors shall appoint a successor alternate lay delegate to serve until the next congregational meeting. At the next congregational meeting an open election shall be held for a replacement for the remainder of the original term of office of alternate lay delegate. In the event that the lay delegate in unable to attend a General or District Conference, the alternate lay delegate shall assume the office of lay delegate for the conference only. The procedure for the removal of an alternate lay delegate shall be the same as for a member of the Board of Directors. (Article D.1.)

G. STANDING COMMITTEES:

The following shall be the standing committees of the Church:

1. PROPERTY COMMITTEE: The Property Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors of the Church its members may include, but is not limited to, the full Board of Directors. Its purpose shall be (1) to locate, secure, and arrange financing of a permanent building for the congregation, and (2) the upkeep of any church facilities, grounds, properties, and contents. A Building Administrator may be appointed by the Pastor to serve as the coordinator of church maintenance and construction projects, inventory and upkeep of church property and grounds, etc. The Building Administrator, if any, will also serve as a member of the Property Committee.

2. FINANCE COMMITTEE: The Finance Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors of the Church and its members may include, but is not limited to, the full Board of Directors. Its purpose is to propose an annual budget for approval of the Church, methods for meeting that budget in a timely manner, and investigation of major expenditures prior to presentation to the full Board of Directors for approval.

3. COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES: The Council of Ministries shall be chaired by the Pastor of the Church and its membership shall consist of the chairpersons, leaders, ministers, and coordinators or administrators of the various programs and activities of the Church as appointed by the Pastor and approved by the Board of Directors.

The following shall be a standing committee of the Board of Directors:

1. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: The Personnel Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors of the Church and its membership shall include and be limited to the full membership of the Board of Directors. Its purpose is to establish and enforce personnel policies of the Church ministerial and lay staff including matters of finance, benefits, discipline, grievances, and reconciliation, pending approval of the congregation.

H. COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE FUND/CLOSET: This Church recognizes the feelings of despair and hopelessness borne by the seriously ill, persons with A.I.D.S., the poor and the victims of misfortune. In an effort to combat the financial difficulties and supply materials needs of these persons, the Church has established the Community Assistance Fund/Closet, a separate financial entity. The Administrators shall consist of the pastor, the Treasurer and one other member of the Board of Directors. They shall be solely responsible for determining the policies under which eligibility for benefits are ascertained and the amount and/or type of benefits granted. No contributions or gifts, earnings on investments or proceeds from the sale of donated items shall accrue to the Church but rather to the Fund itself.

I. STAFF: The Pastor may create and appoint certain positions as needed for the assistance of the Pastor in various administrative and physical areas of the Church programs, activities, and ministries. The organization, positions, titles, terms, and duties shall be recommended by the Pastor and approved by the Personnel Committee and The Board of Directors. An Administrative Staff Assistant may be appointed to assist the Pastor in the coordination of the various committees and activites of the Church.

ARTICLE VI. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING: Any person may apply for initial membership in M.C.C. through Covenant M.C.C. after (1) attending services and activities of the church on a regular basis for at least three months and (2) attending all Inquirer's classes. The Pastor then presents the candidate to the congregatin for confirmation. Exceptions to these two requirments may be granted with the approval of the Pastor and at least two members of the Board of Directors. At least once a year the Board of Directors of the Church shall review the entire membership. Any member who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, definite service contribution, and expressed interest and loyalty with the preceding six (6) months to one (1) year may be removed from the roll of members in good standing and placed on a list of inactive members. The Clerk of the Board of Directors shall notify the member in writing that he/she has been placed on such a list and is not eligible to vote at any congregational meeting of the Church. After notification, if the member has not expressed further interest or loyalty for a period of two (2) months immediately following, the Board of Directors shall have the authority at its discretion to drop any such member from the roll of members. Upon written application, an individual may be restored to the roll of members in good standing by a vote of the Board of Directors and without a public reception into membership.

B. FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH: The Church may accept into the Church persons who, for one reason or another, feel they cannot become regular members of the Church but who support the goals of the Church and want to be a part of the work of the Church. Such persons shall be designated as "Friends of the Church" and may serve on appointed committees and may participate in all activities of the Church. Friends may not, however, serve on the Board of Directors and may not vote at congregational meetings. Friends shall not be considered when determining the number of lay delegates that the Church may send to conferences.

C. DISCIPLINE: This Church cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct on the part of any of its members and friends; therefore, the Board of Directors is empowered to remove by majority vote any member or friend from the rolls of the Church or take such disciplinary action as it deems necessary. The action of the Board of Directors is subject to review by a vote of the congregation at its next regular meeting or at a special meeting which may be called for such a purpose. Until the review vote, the disciplined member will retain membership, or a disciplined friend with retain "friend" status.

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH SERVICES

This Church shall hold services of public worship every Sunday. Other worship services may be held as determined by the pastor with the approval of the Board of Directors. The Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be offered each Sunday as well as at other worship services at the discretion of the pastor. Holy Baptism may be administered at any appropriate service, or at any other time, at the discretion of the pastor.

ARTICLE VIII. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS.

This Church must hold an annual congregational business meeting in January of each year. A second congregational meeting must be held in each year in which there is a General Conference for the purpose of electing the lay delegate(s) and alternate lay delegate(s) for the next two-year term and to conduct any other business as is necessary. This second congregational meeting should be held as soon as possible after General Conference. A second congregational meeting may be held in the month of July in years in which there is no General Conference at the request of the Board of Directors to conduct any and all business which may be necessary. Additional congregational meetings for special purposes may be called at any time at the discretion of the Board of Directors. In order to transact business no less than twenty percent (20%) of the members in good standing must be present. Two (2) weeks notice must be given in writing to all members at their last known addresses.

Special meetings of the congregation can be called by the Board or Directors or can be called by petition submitted to the Board of Directors. The petition must be signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing. Such special meetings shall be governed by the same rules as those pertaining to regular congregational meetings. The nature of the special meeting must be stated in the petition and notices and must be written into the agenda of said special meeting. Additions to the stated agenda are out of order.

ARTICLE IX. CHURCH FINANCES.

This Church adopts and teaches tithing as the spiritually affirmed means of supporting the Church and its ministries, and as the expression of good stewardship of time, skills and finances by individual members. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of both the clergy and the lay leadership of the Church to plan and implement programs of stewardship both to help persons grow in the grace of giving and to fund the Church's ministries. An offering shall be received at each service of public worship.

The Treasurer of the Board of Directors shall report all Church receipts each month to the UFMCC and the District, and with that report shall remit ten percent (10%) of the funds to the UFMCC and five percent (5%) to the District. Only bequests, building funds or funds to meet the immediate needs of persons in distress shall be omitted in calculating the amount due the UFMCC and the District. Reports and remittances are due on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month following the month being reported.

Any bank or financial account in the name of the COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH or the COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE FUND must require two (2) signatures for withdrawals, one of which must be that of an elected member of the Board of Directors, preferably the Treasurer.

It shall be the policy of this Church to discharge all of its obligations and outstanding debts in a prompt and timely manner. However, at such time as Church financial assets are not sufficient to carry out this policy, debts shall be discharged according to the following priority:

1. UFMCC Tithes
2. District Tithes
3. Salary or allowances of the pastor
4. Contractual payments, especially rent for place or worship
5. Utilities

ARTICLE X. CHURCH PROPERTY

The Board of Directors shall be the trustees of any and all property acquired by this Church. The Board of Directors shall have control of said property and may sell or otherwise dispose of said property subject to the approval of the congregation. If this Church is disbanded by the Board of Directors and the District Committee, said property will revert to the use of the General Conference of UFMCC.

ARTICLE XI. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Church at any congregational meeting scheduled for this purpose and shall thereafter be binding upon all members and "friends".

These By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures may be amended at any duly convened congregational meeting for such a purpose. Such amendments can only be effective if authorized by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members in good standing present at said meeting.

ARTICLE XII. CONTROLLING BY-LAWS

These By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures have been established in accordance with those of the UFMCC and the District. If discrepancies exist or in situations not addressed herein, the By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures of the higher authorities shall control.

RESOLUTION I. ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

The following resolution adopted by congregational meeting dated January 12, 1986 is hereby included in these By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures by vote of congregational meeting dated June 8, 1986:

> We of COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH, in an effort to be supportive of our alcohol and drug-troubled community, choose in our church activities to refrain from alcohol and drug use.

LE I. NAME

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B. This Church shall be affiliated with the UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES (hereinafter called UFMCC).

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B. To do all things that are compatible with the work of a Christian Church.

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We believe:

1. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God—our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit—God as our Sustainer.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus ... the Christ ... historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

7. This Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services to worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

LE I. NAME

A. The name of this Church shall be the COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH.

B. This Church shall be affiliated with the UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES (hereinafter called UFMCC).

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The objective of this Church shall be:

A. To share in the worship of God in the Christian tradition and to make God's will dominant in the lives of all people, individually and collectively, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures; and

B. To do all things that are compatible with the work of a Christian Church.

ARTICLE III. DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS, AND RITES

A. DOCTRINE: Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Christian Church in every age and in every land.

In the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, this Church, as an affiliated local Church in UFMCC, moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

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COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

BY-LAWS & STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

AS ADOPTED BY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

JUNE 8, 1986

AND LAST AMENDED JANUARY 16, 1994

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MISSION STATMENT

WE EXIST TO:

CELEBRATE THE LOVE OF GOD

Through awareness of and response to God's presence.
Through communion with and commitment to Jesus Christ.
Through oneness and praise in the Holy Spirit.

CULTIVATE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD

Through the study of God's Word.
Through application of Christ's teachings to our lives.
Through growth and development as a community of Christians.

CARE ABOUT ONE ANOTHER IN CHRIST

Through sharing one another's joys, growth, and needs.
Through recognition, development, and use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in each person.
Through prayer, service, and sacrifice to meet each other's needs.

COMMUNICATE CHRIST TO ALL PEOPLE

Through sharing the good news of God's all-inclusive love and acceptance.
Through letting others see Jesus in us.
Through discipling, by celebration, nurturing, and caring.

B. SACRAMENTS: This Church embraces two holy Sacraments:

1. BAPTISM by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is identified as God's own Child.

2. HOLY COMMUNION is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with the words of Jesus, our Sovereign: "This is my body ... this is my blood." (Matthew 26:26-28). All who believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received into community with Jesus Christ, to be saved by Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus Christ's resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to the service of Jesus Christ.

C. RITES: The Rites of this Church as performed by its duly authorized ministers shall consist of the following:

1. The RITE OF ORDINATION is the setting apart of duly qualified persons for the professional ministry of this Church. It is evidenced by the laying on of hands by authorized ordained clergy, pursuant to the By-Laws of UFMCC.

2. The RITE OF ATTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH shall be conducted by the pastor before a congregation at any regular worship service. After completing classes for instruction in the beliefs and doctrines of the Church, a baptized Christian may become a member in good standing of this Church through a letter of transfer from a recognized Christian body or through an affirmation of faith.

3. The RITE OF HOLY UNION and the RITE OF HOLY MATRIMONY are the spiritual joining of two persons in a manner fitting and proper by a duly authorized clergy of the Church. After both persons have been counseled and apprised of their responsibilities one towards the other, this rite of conferring God's blessing may be performed.

4. The RITE OF FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE is to be fittingly conducted by the ministers of the Church for the deceased.

5. The RITE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS or prayer for the healing of the sick in mind, body or spirit is to be conducted by the ministers of the Church, at their discretion, upon request.

6. The RITE OF BLESSING may be conducted by the ministers of the Church for persons, things and relationships, when deemed appropriate by the minister. This includes the dedication of a church building to the glory of God.

ARTICLE IV. MINISTRY

UFMCC affirms the universal priesthood of all believers (I Peter 2:5-10). All members of this Church are called by God to a ministry of the Gospel of Christ in this Church and in the world.

A. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY:

1. The Priesthood of All Believers: Laypeople are the People of God, called by God and authorized by Scripture to respond to the Word, serving as Christ served, to the end that the Church may be edified and the world transformed.

2. DEACONS: As outlined in the New Testament, their office is an historic ministry of service and aid within the Christian Church. It is a two-fold ministry—one consisting of direct ministry to persons; the other dealing with Church implements and the serving of Rites and Sacraments.

a. QUALIFICATIONS: Deacons shall be members in good standing and be persons of spiritual mind, exemplary lives, joyful outlook, sound judgement, and of proven dedicated service.

b. RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with the spiritual responsibilities of the office, and, under the authorization and direction of their appointing authority, deacons minister to those in need, the sick, the friendless, and those persons who may be in distress, and may serve and administer the Rites and Sacraments.

c. APPOINTMENTS: All persons appointed deacons by the pastor are subject to approval by both the District Coordinator and the Board of Directors. (Commissioned Church Status)

d. TRAINING: Training, in compliance with District directives, before and after the appointment of deacons, is responsibility of the appointing authority and may be delegated.

e. DISCIPLINE: A deacon may be disciplined for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or the dereliction of duty. For cause, the appointing authority may suspend a deacon from the exercise of a deacon's duties for a period of not more than thirty (30) days, and must report that suspension and the reasons for it to the approving authorities. The appointing authority, together with the approval of the majority of the full Board of Directors, and with the approval of the District Coordinator, may for cause remove a deacon from office or impose lesser discipline. (Commissioned Church Status)

f. DISTRICT WORKS: If the need arises, deacons are available at the request of the District Coordinator to serve for district work. This request is subject to the approval of the pastor and the District Committee.

B. MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY:

1. CLERGY: Clergy are members of the People of God, called by God, authorized and legally recognized by UFMCC to serve among the people as professional ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

a. QUALIFICATIONS: Clergy are those persons of professed and demonstrated call to be professional Christian ministers who meet the qualifications established by the Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee (hereinafter called the CCCC) of the UFMCC. These qualifications are subject to the approval of the General Conference.

b. RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with their call, clergy shall administer Rites and Sacraments of UFMCC and be teachers and preachers of the faith to the end that the world may believe and the Church might be renewed, equipped and strengthened to its ministry.

c. CREDENTIALS: In accordance with procedures and standards established by the CCCC and subject to the approval of General Conference, credentials as clergy are issued either on a lifetime basis or are subject to periodic review.

d. DISCIPLINE: Initiation of disciplinary procedure for clergy as a result of disloyalty, unbecoming conduct or dereliction of duty may only be accomplished by a formal statement of charges made by 1) a majority of the congregation of this Church, 2) a majority of the elected District Officers, or 3) three members of the clergy of UFMCC. The charges must be presented in writing to the accused clergyperson and to the appropriate Judiciary Committee appointed by UFMCC.

2. STUDENT CLERGY: Student clergy are qualified persons who feel called by God to serve among the people as professional ministers of the Word and Sacraments. For a limited time they may serve in this position to test their and to develop needed skills.

a. QUALIFICATIONS: Before being appointed student clergy, an individual must be a member in good standing within UFMCC and must have demonstrated a spiritual disposition, willingness and ability to work well with others, and must show promise of ability to do the study and work of the clergy.

b RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with their call and the test of that call, student clergy will concentrate on learning experiences. Those learning experiences shall include ministry in the Church as well as academic studies.

Student clergy may, under the authorization and direction of the appointing authority, administer the Rites and Sacraments. Except in extraordinary circumstances, student clergy shall not serve on the Board of Directors. Student clergy may serve as the pastor.

c. APPOINTMENTS: All persons appointed student clergy by the pastor are subject to approval by both the District Coordinator and the Board of Directors (Commissioned Church Status). The term of a student clergy shall be for one year. No person shall serve as a student clergy for more than a total of five terms.

d. TRAINING: The student clergy will engage in a program of spiritual and practical study as guided by the CCCC under the direction of the appointing authority and/or through any appropriate educational agency. This program may be supplemented by the District Committee or any person and/or agency appointed by the District Committee.

e. DISCIPLINE: Reasons and procedures for discipline or removal of student clergy are identical to those given in these By-Laws for deacons.

f. DISTRICT WORKS: If the need arises, the District Coordinator may request student clergy to serve for district work. This request is subject to approval of the appointing authority and the District Committee.

ARTICLE V. GOVERNMENT, ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS

A. GOVERNMENT: COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH subscribes to the government and doctrine of the UFMCC and has been authorized by the same.

B. ORGANIZATION: This Church recognizes the following bodies of government structure and authority:

1. FELLOWSHIP: Internationally, the government of UFMCC is vested in the General Conference, subject to provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation, its By-Laws, or documents of legal incorporation. Between General Conferences, the Board of Elders and the General Council are those government bodies which are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative leadership on the international Fellowship level.

2. DISTRICT: Districts are those defined bodies which are created by the General Council and are accountable to the General Conference. They are called into existence to enable and empower Christian ministry within specific geographic regions through their member congregations. District Conferences are legislative gatherings of the District to establish District By-Laws or Standard Operating Procedures for the nominations of members of the District Committee, all District Officers and for the conduct of District business. The District By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures must be in accordance with those of UFMCC.

3. COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH: The government of this Church is vested in its congregational meetings which exert the right to control all of its affairs, subject to provisions of UFMCC By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation, or documents of legal organization, General Conferences and District Conferences. The pastor and the Board of Directors are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative leadership in this Church.

C. PASTOR: The pastor is that person elected by the congregation to be responsible for the duties of teacher, preacher, spiritual leader and counselor. The pastor must be approved by the District Coordinator and District Committee. (Commissioned Church Status)

1. QUALIFICATIONS: The pastor must be credentialed clergy in the UFMCC unless an exception is made by the District Committee.

2. DUTIES: The pastor shall have the authority for ordering all worship services of the Church. The pastor shall provide for other programs of a spiritual nature including (but not limited to) Bible study, Christian education classes and retreats according to the needs of the congregation. The pastor shall provide, for prospective Church members, classes of instruction in the beliefs and doctrines of the Church. The pastor has the authority, subject to the appropriate approval, to appoint deacons of the Church and is responsible for their training, supervision and discipline. The

pastor shall schedule regular hours during which times he/she will be available for counseling appointments. The pastor shall be available for counseling at other times, unless emergency circumstances exist, at his/her discretion. The pastor is a voting member of the Board of Directors and serves as moderator of congregational meetings and meetings of the Board of Directors. The pastor shall serve as an Administrator of the Community Assistance Fund/Closet. Associate or assistant pastor(s) and other personnel, compensated or uncompensated, shall be appointed by the pastor, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. The pastor shall serve as the personnel director of the Church staff, shall have their authority to delegate such responsibilities and duties as seem wise, and shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, determine compensation, vacation periods, times off, and titles of office for the staff.

3. COMPENSATION: The pastor and the Board of Directors shall construct, by mutual consent, a contract for the services of the pastor which specifically enumerates the duties and time commitments of the pastor, the forms of compensation to be provided in exchange for those services, vacations and times-off, and the time period during which the contract is to be effective.

4. TERMINATION OF SERVICE:

a. When it is felt that irreconcilable differences exist between the pastor and congregation, the pastor, the Board of Directors or the lay delegate shall request that a ministry of reconciliation, in accorance with the Scriptures, be initiated by the District Coordinator or a person appointed by the District Coordinator. If the differences cannot be resolved, they may through mutual agreement choose to terminate their relationship.

b. The process of removing the pastor from office for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction of duty or when irreconcilable differences arise between the pastor and congregation may be initiated by: a petition submitted to the Clerk of the Board of Directors of the Church signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing, or by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the full Board of Directors. Within three (3) days the pastor, the Distict Coordinator, the World Church Extension Elder and the Senior Chaplain of Spiritual Life and Clergy Care Center must be sent a copy of the completed petition by the Clerk of the Board.

After the District Coordinator and the Clerk of the Board of the Church have validated the number of members who have signed the petition and the clarity of the petition, the District Coordinator may place the pastor on inactive status, but the pastor remains fully compensated until the final action of the congregation. Upon validating the petition, the District Coordinator and Clerk of the Board of Directors of the Church will set the time and place of a special congregational meeting. The date of the meeting shall occur within thirty (30) days of the date the petition is submitted to the Clerk of the Board. The only question to be voted on at the meeting shall be: "Shall the pastor remain in office?"

The pastor has the right to appear on his/her own behalf before the congregational meeting and may have an advocate of his/her own choosing present. The action of the congregation is final. If a special meeting is called to remove a pastor, the District Coordinator and the UFMCC Board of Elders must be given notice that such action is being taken. The District Coordinator shall attend or send a representative as an impartial observer who shall moderate the meeting. If the pastor is removed, the Board of Directors will meet immediately thereafter with the District Coordinator or the representative to provide pastoral leadership until the pulpit is filled. The Board of Directors will confer with the District Coordinator as to available candidates for the office of pastor.

D. BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

1. TERM OF OFFICE: The Board of Directors shall consist of six (6) Church members in good standing, including the Pastor. The term of office is two (2) years with the exception of the Pastor, who holds office for as long as he/she continues as pastor. Board of Directors's terms of office must be staggered. Place 2 (Treasurer), Place 4 and Place 6 positions are elected in January of even years. Place 3 (Clerk of the Board) and Place 5 positions are elected in January of odd years. In the event of the resignation, death or removal from office of a Board member, the remaining Board members may appoint an interim Board member to serve until the next congregational meeting. In such case, at the next congregational meeting, an open election will be held to elect a replacement for the remainder of the original term of office.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY: The Board of Directors is subject to these By-Laws and is accountable to the congregation for its actions at all times. For reporting and planning purposes, each Board member is required to submit a written report at each Board meeting. Such report must outline progress made on projects or activities under his/her responsibility since the last Board meeting and discuss plans, projects, activities, etc. to be begun or accomplished prior to the next Board meeting.

3. DISCIPLINE: The Church will not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct or dereliction of duty on the part of any member of the Board of Directors. Therefore, the Board of Directors may remove, by a majority vote of the full Board, any of its members found guilty of the above, with the exception of the pastor, who must be disciplined in accordance with Article V.C.4. A petition presented to the Board of Directors and signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing of the Church may also initiate such a procedure.

Furthermore, two (2) unexcused absences from Board of Directors meetings during any calendar year will automatically be considered cause for removal from the Board. The Board of Directors must vote to determine whether an absence will be deemed excused or unexcused. However, under no circumstances may an absence be deemed excused when prior notification of the absence is not given, unless the situation is an emergency. The Clerk of the Board will notify any Board member removed under this paragraph of his/her removal in writing and such notification must include the signatures of at least two (2) other Board members.

4. TITLES: The Board of Directors will consist of the Pastor, the Treasurer, the Clerk, and three (3) At-Large Board Members. Other titles, including Vice-Moderator, and areas of responsibility will be determined by the Board of Directors at the first Board meeting immediately following the election of Board member(s). The Clerk of the Board will include a description of the titles and areas of responsibility as a part of the minutes of that meeting to be distributed to the congregation.

E. LAY DELEGATE: This Church shall have one (1) vote for every one hundred (100) members in good standing or portion thereof and shall elect one (1) lay delegate for each vote. Each lay delegate shall carry one (1) vote. The delegate(s) must be elected at the first congregational meeting following each General Conference and shall serve for a term of two (2) years. The lay delegate shall represent the congregation at General and District Conferences, be informed of UFMCC and District concerns, policies and issues, and communicate these to the congregation. The lay delegate shall solicit the concerns, opinions, etc. of congregation members individually and by special meeting(s) for such purpose for communication to UFMCC and the District. The lay delegate shall prepare written reports to the congregation and Board of Directors immediately following each General or District Conference detailing the events of the conference and their impact on the congregation. Failure of the lay delegate to attend two (2) conferences during his/her term of office shall constitute cause for removal from office. The procedure for the removal of a lay delegate shall be the same as for a member of the Board of Directors. (Article D.1.)

F. ALTERNATE LAY DELEGATE: One (1) alternate lay delegate shall be elected for each lay delegate. The terms of office of the lay delegate(s) and alternate lay delegate(s) shall be concurrent. The alternate lay delegate(s) shall serve under the guidance of the lay delegate(s) and it shall be their duty to assist the lay delegate(s) in the performance of their duties. In the event of the resignation, death, or removal of a lay delegate, the alternate lay delegate shall assume the office of lay delegate for the remainder of the term of office. The Board of Directors shall appoint a successor alternate lay delegate to serve until the next congregational meeting. At the next congregational meeting an open election shall be held for a replacement for the remainder of the original term of office of alternate lay delegate. In the event that the lay delegate in unable to attend a General or District Conference, the alternate lay delegate shall assume the office of lay delegate for the conference only. The procedure for the removal of an alternate lay delegate shall be the same as for a member of the Board of Directors. (Article D.1.)

STANDING COMMITTEES:

The following shall be the standing committees of the Church:

1. PROPERTY COMMITTEE: The Property Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors of the Church its members may include, but is not limited to, the full Board of Directors. Its purpose shall be (1) to locate, secure, and arrange financing of a permanent building for the congregation, and (2) the upkeep of any church facilities, grounds, properties, and contents. A Building Administrator may be appointed by the Pastor to serve as the coordinator of church maintenance and construction projects, inventory and upkeep of church property and grounds, etc. The Building Administrator, if any, will also serve as a member of the Property Committee.

2. FINANCE COMMITTEE: The Finance Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors of the Church and its members may include, but is not limited to, the full Board of Directors. Its purpose is to propose an annual budget for approval of the Church, methods for meeting that budget in a timely manner, and investigation of major expenditures prior to presentation to the full Board of Directors for approval.

3. COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES: The Council of Ministries shall be chaired by the Pastor of the Church and its membership shall consist of the chairpersons, leaders, ministers, and coordinators or administrators of the various programs and activities of the Church as appointed by the Pastor and approved by the Board of Directors.

The following shall be a standing committee of the Board of Directors:

1. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: The Personnel Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors of the Church and its membership shall include and be limited to the full membership of the Board of Directors. Its purpose is to establish and enforce personnel policies of the Church ministerial and lay staff including matters of finance, benefits, discipline, grievances, and reconciliation, pending approval of the congregation.

H. COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE FUND/CLOSET: This Church recognizes the feelings of despair and hopelessness borne by the seriously ill, persons with A.I.D.S., the poor and the victims of misfortune. In an effort to combat the financial difficulties and supply materials needs of these persons, the Church has established the Community Assistance Fund/Closet, a separate financial entity. The Administrators shall consist of the pastor, the Treasurer and one member of the Deaconate Staff. They shall be solely responsible for determining the policies under which eligibility for benefits are ascertained and the amount and/or type of benefits granted. No contributions or gifts, earnings on investments or proceeds from the sale of donated items shall accrue to the Church but rather to the Fund itself.

I. STAFF: The Pastor may create and appoint certain positions as needed for the assistance of the Pastor in various administrative and physical areas of the Church programs, activities, and ministries. The organization, positions, titles, terms, and duties shall be recommended by the Pastor and approved by the Personnel Committee and The Board of Directors. An Administrative Staff Assistant may be appointed to assist the Pastor in the coordination of the various committees and activites of the Church.

ARTICLE VI. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING: Any person may apply for initial membership in M.C.C. through Covenant M.C.C. after (1) attending services and activities of the church on a regular basis for at least three months and (2) attending all Inquirer's classes. The Pastor then presents the candidate to the congregatin for confirmation. Exceptions to these two requirments may be granted with the approval of the Pastor and at least two members of the Board of Directors. At least once a year the Board of Directors of the Church shall review the entire membership. Any member who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, definite service contribution, and expressed interest and loyalty with the preceding six (6) months to one (1) year may be removed from the roll of members in good standing and placed on a list of inactive members. The Clerk of the Board of Directors shall notify the member in writing that he/she has been placed on such a list and is not eligible to vote at any congregational meeting of the Church. After notification, if the member has not expressed further interest or loyalty for a period of two (2) months immediately following, the Board of Directors shall have the authority at its discretion to drop any such member from the roll of members. Upon written application, an individual may be restored to the roll of members in good standing by a vote of the Board of Directors and without a public reception into membership.

B. FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH: The Church may accept into the Church persons who, for one reason or another, feel they cannot become regular members of the Church but who support the goals of the Church and want to be a part of the work of the Church. Such persons shall be designated as "Friends of the Church" and may serve on appointed committees and may participate in all activities of the Church. Friends may not, however, serve on the Board of Directors and may not vote at congregational meetings. Friends shall not be considered when determining the number of lay delegates that the Church may send to conferences.

C. DISCIPLINE: This Church cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct on the part of any of its members and friends; therefore, the Board of Directors is empowered to remove by majority vote any member or friend from the rolls of the Church or take such disciplinary action as it deems necessary. The action of the Board of Directors is subject to review by a vote of the congregation at its next regular meeting or at a special meeting which may be called for such a purpose. Until the review vote, the disciplined member will retain membership, or a disciplined friend with retain "friend" status.

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH SERVICES

This Church shall hold services of public worship every Sunday. Other worship services may be held as determined by the pastor with the approval of the Board of Directors. The Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be offered each Sunday as well as at other worship services at the discretion of the pastor. Holy Baptism may be administered at any appropriate service, or at any other time, at the discretion of the pastor.

ARTICLE VIII. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS.

This Church must hold an annual congregational business meeting in January of each year. Additional congregational meetings for special purposes may be called at any time at the discretion of the Board of Directors. In order to transact business no less than twenty percent (20%) of the members in good standing must be present. Two (2) weeks notice must be given in writing to all members at their last known addresses. Photocopies of a proposed agenda and pertinent materials (i.e., the proposed budget, proposed by-laws amendments, etc.) must be included with this notice.

Special meetings of the congregation can be called by the Board or Directors or can be called by petition submitted to the Board of Directors. The petition must be signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing. Such special

meetings shall be governed by the same rules as those pertaining to regular congregational meetings. The nature of the special meeting must be stated in the petition and notices and must be written into the agenda of said special meeting. Additions to the stated agenda are out of order.

ARTICLE IX. CHURCH FINANCES.

This Church adopts and teaches tithing as the spiritually affirmed means of supporting the Church and its ministries, and as the expression of good stewardship of time, skills and finances by individual members. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of both the clergy and the lay leadership of the Church to plan and implement programs of stewardship both to help persons grow in the grace of giving and to fund the Church's ministries. An offering shall be received at each service of public worship.

The Treasurer of the Board of Directors shall report all Church receipts each month to the UFMCC and the District, and with that report shall remit ten percent (10%) of the funds to the UFMCC and five percent (5%) to the District. Only bequests, building funds or funds to meet the immediate needs of persons in distress shall be omitted in calculating the amount due the UFMCC and the District. Reports and remittances are due on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month following the month being reported.

Any bank or financial account in the name of the COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH or the COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE FUND must require two (2) signatures for withdrawals, one of which must be that of an elected member of the Board of Directors, preferably the Treasurer.

It shall be the policy of this Church to discharge all of its obligations and outstanding debts in a prompt and timely manner. However, at such time as Church financial assets are not sufficient to carry out this policy, debts shall be discharged according to the following priority:

1. UFMCC Tithes
2. District Tithes
3. Salary or allowances of the pastor
4. Contractual payments, especially rent for place or worship
5. Utilities

ARTICLE X. CHURCH PROPERTY

The Board of Directors shall be the trustees of any and all property acquired by this Church. The Board of Directors shall have control of said property and may sell or otherwise dispose of said property subject to the approval of the congregation. If this Church is disbanded by the Board of Directors and the District Committee, said property will revert to the use of the General Conference of UFMCC.

ARTICLE XI. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Church at any congregational meeting scheduled for this purpose and shall thereafter be binding upon all members and "friends".

These By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures may be amended at any duly convened congregational meeting for such a purpose. Such amendments can only be effective if authorized by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members in good standing present at said meeting.

ARTICLE XII. CONTROLLING BY-LAWS

These By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures have been established in accordance with those of the UFMCC and the District. If discrepancies exist or in situations not addressed herein, the By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures of the higher authorities shall control.

RESOLUTION I. ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

The following resolution adopted by congregational meeting dated January 12, 1986 is hereby included in these By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures by vote of congregational meeting dated June 8, 1986:

> We of COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH, in an effort to be supportive of our alcohol and drug-troubled community, choose in our church activities to refrain from alcohol and drug use.

Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene.

We believe:

1. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God - our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit - God as our Sustainer.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus ... the Christ ... historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

B. SACRAMENTS: This church embraces two holy Sacraments:

1. BAPTISM by water and the Spirit, as recorded in th Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of each life t God and God's service. Through the words and acts of thi sacrament, the recipient is identified as God's own Child.

2. HOLY COMMUNION is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with the words of Jesus, ou Sovereign: "This is my body...this is my blood." (Matthe 26:26-28). All who believe, confess and repent and seek God's lov through Christ, after examining their consciences, may freel participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to b received into community with Jesus Christ, to be saved by Jesu Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus Christ's resurrection and to commit their lives anew to the service of Jesus Christ.

C. RITES: The Rites of the Church as performed by its duly authorized ministers shall consist of the following:

1. The RITE OF ORDINATION is the setting apart of dul qualified persons for the professional ministry of thi church. It is evidenced by the laying on of hands by authorize ordained clergy, pursuant to these By-Laws.

2. The RITE OF ATTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH shall b conducted by the pastor or worship coordinator before local congregation at any regular worship service. After complet ing classes for instruction in the beliefs and doctrines of th church, a baptized Christian may become a member in good standin of the local church group through a letter of transfer from a rec ognized Christian body or through affirmation of faith.

3. The RITE OF HOLY UNION and the RITE OF HOLY MATRIMONY ar the spiritual joining of two persons in a manner fitting an proper by a duly authorized clergy of the Church. After both per sons have been counseled and apprised of their responsibilities on towards the other, this rite of conferring God's blessing may b performed.

4. The RITE OF FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE is to be fittingl conducted by the ministers of the Church for the deceased.

5. The RITE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS or prayer for the healing o the sick in mind, body or spirit is to be conducted by th ministers of the Church, at their discretion, upon request.

6. The RITE OF BLESSING may be conducted by the ministers of the Church for persons, things and relationships, when deemed appropriated by the minister. This includes the dedication of a church building to the glory of God.

ARTICLE IV
MINISTRY

The UFMCC affirms the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:-5-10). All members of the Church are called by God to a ministry of the Gospel of Christ in the Church and in the world.

A. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY

1. The Priesthood of All Believers: Laypeople are the People of God, called by God and authorized by Scripture to respond to the Word, serving as Christ served, to the end that the Church may be edified and the world transformed. UFMCC affirms that this is the ministry of every layperson in this Fellowship.

2. DEACONS: As outlined in the New Testament, their office is an historic ministry of service and aid within the Christian Church.

(a) RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with the spiritual responsibilities of the office, deacons minister to those in need, the sick, the friendless, and those persons who may be in distress. Deacons serve, and may administer the Rites and Sacraments, under the authorization and direction of their appointing authority. Except in extraordinary circumstances, deacons shall not serve on local church Boards of Directors/local church administrative bodies.

(b) QUALIFICATIONS: Deacons shall be members in good standing of a local church body and be persons of spiritual mind, exemplary lives, joyful outlook, sound judgement, and of proven dedicated service.

(c) APPOINTMENTS:

1. All persons appointed deacons by the pastors of Chartered Churches are subject to approval by the local Board of Directors/local church administrative body.

2. All persons appointed deacons in Commissioned Churches by the pastor or worship coordinator are subject to approval both by the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Church Extension and by the Board of Directors/local church administrative body.

3. The term of office for deacons shall be for three (3) years. Persons may be reappointed at the end of any term.

(d) TRAINING: Training before and after the appointment of deacons is the responsibility of the appointing authority and may be delegated.

(e) DISCIPLINE: A deacon may be disciplined for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty. For cause, the appointing authority may suspend a deacon from the exercise of a deacon's duties for a period of not more than thirty (30) days, and must report that suspension and the reasons for it to the approving authority/authorities.

1. In Chartered Churches, the pastor, together with a majority vote of the full Board of Directors/local church administrative body, may for cause remove a deacon from office or impose lesser discipline.

2. In Commissioned Churches, the pastor/worship coordinator, together with the approval of the majority of the full Board of Directors, and with the approval of the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Church Extension, may for cause remove a deacon from office or impose lesser discipline.

(f) DISTRICT WORKS: If the need arises, the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Church Extension, may request a deacon to serve for district work. This request is subject to approval of the appointing authority and District Committee/Board of World Church Extension.

B. MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY:

1. CLERGY: Clergy are members of the People of God, called by God, authorized and legally recognized by this Fellowship to serve among the people as professional ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

(a) RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with their call, clergy

shall administer the Rites and Sacraments of this Fellowship and be teachers and preachers of the faith to the end that the world may believe and the Church might be renewed, equipped, and strengthened in its ministry.

(b) QUALIFICATIONS: Clergy are those persons of professed and demonstrated call to be professional Christian ministers who meet the qualifications established by the Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee (hereinafter called C.C.C.C.). These qualifications shall be subject to approval of the General Conference.

(c) CREDENTIALS: In accordance with procedures and standards established by the C.C.C.C. and subject to approval of the General Conference, credentials as clergy will be issued on a biennial or a lifetime basis. When candidates are initially licensed as clergy in the UFMCC their license shall be in effect for one (1) year. At the end of one (1) year, the newly licensed clergyperson shall appear for review before the respective Credentials Review Committee. If the review is favorable, the clergyperson shall then and thereafter be subject to relicensing on a two (2) year basis.

(d) DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct or dereliction of duty by the clergy and therefore the following provisions are established for discipline of clergy:

(1) Initiation of disciplinary procedure for clergy of UFMCC may only be accomplished by a formal statement of charges made by 1) a majority vote of the local congregation affected, 2) a majority of the elected District Officers, or 3) three members of the clergy of the Fellowship. The charges must be presented in writing to the accused clergyperson and to the appropriate Judiciary Committee appointed by the Board of Elders.

(2) The Judiciary Committee(s) functions according to standards and procedures, including appeals, established by the C.C.C.C. and subject to approval of the General Conference. The committee shall be responsible to determine facts alleged and whether those facts constitute disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty.

(3) The Judiciary Committee(s) may take disciplinary

action by administering rebuke and/or 1) impose specific conditions on the exercise of the credentials of the clergyperson charged for not more than one (1) year, 2) suspension from duty or of clergy credentials for not more than one (1) year, or 3) removal of credentials. The Judiciary Committee(s) shall direct the C.C.C.C. to minister to the clergyperson charged.

(4) The Judiciary Committee(s) may rebuke parties who are found to have brought charges frivolously or maliciously.

(e) RETIREMENT: The UFMCC recognizes as honorably retired, clergy who retire after suitable years of service for age, illness, or other compelling reasons. Such clergy shall retain all rights and privileges accorded to the credentials held upon retirement.

2. STUDENT CLERGY: Student clergy are qualified persons who feel called by God to serve among the people as professional ministers of the Word and Sacraments. For a limited time they may serve in this position to test their call and to develop needed skills.

a. RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with their call and the test of that call, student clergy will concentrate on learning experiences. Those learning experiences shall include ministry in local congregations as well as academic studies. Student clergy may administer the Rites and Sacraments under the authorization and direction of the appointing authority. Except in extraordinary circumstances, student clergy shall not serve on a Board of Directors/local church administrative body. Student clergy may serve as worship coordinators of churches.

b. QUALIFICATIONS: Before being appointed student clergy, an individual must be a member in good standing within this Fellowship and must have demonstrated a spiritual disposition, willingness and ability to work well with others, and must show promise of ability to do the study and work of the clergy in this Fellowship.

c. APPOINTMENTS:

(1) All persons appointed student clergy by pastors of

ARTICLE III
DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS AND RITES

A. DOCTRINE: Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Christian Church in every age and in every land.

Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene.

We believe:

1. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God, - our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit, - God as our Sustainer.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus...the Christ...historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

B. SACRAMENTS: This Church embraces two holy Sacraments:

1. BAPTISM by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is identified as God's own Child.

2. HOLY COMMUNION is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with the words of Jesus, our Sovereign: "This is my body...this is my blood." (Matthew 26:26-28). All who believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received into community with Jesus Christ, to be saved by Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus Christ's resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to the service of Jesus Christ.

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3. The RITE OF HOLY UNION and the RITE OF HOLY MATRIMONY are the spiritual joining of two persons in a manner fitting and proper by a duly authorized clergy of the Church. After both persons have been counseled and apprised of their responsibilities one towards the other, this rite of conferring God's blessing may be performed.

4. The RITE OF FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE is to be fittingly conducted by the ministers of the Church for the deceased.

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ARTICLE IV
MINISTRY

The UFMCC affirms the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5-10). All members of the Church are called by God to a ministry of the Gospel of Christ in the Church and in the world.

UFMCC decrees that all people shall have equality of access and opportunity which is free from discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, physical challenge, HIV status, health status, gender identification, nationality, or economic status in terms of:

1] Employment and personnel procedures
2] Service delivery -- all that we do.

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6. The RITE OF BLESSING may be conducted by the ministers of the Church for persons, things and relationships, when deemed appropriate by the minister. This includes the dedication of a church building to the glory of God.

ARTICLE IV
MINISTRY

The UFMCC affirms the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5-10). All members of the Church are called by God to a ministry of the Gospel of Christ in the Church and in the world.

UFMCC decrees that all people shall have equality of access and opportunity which is free from discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, physical challenge, HIV status, health status, gender identification, nationality, or economic status in terms of:

1] Employment and personnel procedures
2] Service delivery -- all that we do.

A. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY

1. The Priesthood of All Believers: Laypeople are the People of God, called by God and authorized by Scripture to respond to the Word, serving as Christ served, to the end that the Church may be edified and the world transformed. UFMCC affirms that this is the ministry of every layperson in this Fellowship.

2. DEACONS: As outlined in the New Testament, their office is an historic ministry of service and aid within the Christian Church.

(a) RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with the spiritual responsibilities of the office, deacons minister to those in need, the sick, the friendless, and those persons who may be in distress. Deacons serve, and may administer the Rites and Sacraments, under the authorization and direction of their appointing authority. Except in extraordinary circumstances, deacons shall not serve on local church Boards of Directors/local church administrative bodies.

(b) QUALIFICATIONS: Deacons shall be members in good standing of a local church body and be persons of spiritual mind, exemplary lives, joyful outlook, sound judgement, and of proven dedicated service.

(c) APPOINTMENTS:

1. All persons appointed deacons by the Pastors of Chartered Churches are subject to approval by the local Board of Directors/local church administrative body.

2. All persons appointed deacons in Commissioned Churches by the Pastor or pastoral leader are subject to approval both by the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Church Extension and by the Board of Directors/local church administrative body.

3. The term of office for deacons shall be for three (3) years. Persons may be reappointed at the end of any term.

(d) TRAINING: Training before and after the appointment of deacons is the responsibility of the appointing authority and may be delegated.

(e) DISCIPLINE: A deacon may be disciplined for disloyalty or unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty. For cause, the appointing authority may suspend a deacon from the exercise of a deacon's duties for a period of not more than thirty (30) days, and must report that suspension and the reasons for it to the approving authority/authorities.

1. In Chartered Churches, the Pastor, together with a majority vote of the full Board of Directors/local church administrative body, may for cause remove a deacon from office or impose lesser discipline.

2. In Commissioned Churches, the Pastor/pastoral leader, together with the approval of the majority of the full Board of Directors, and with the approval of the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Church Extension, may for cause remove a deacon from office or impose lesser discipline.

(f) DISTRICT WORKS: If the need arises, the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Church Extension, may request a deacon to serve for district work. This request is subject to approval of the appointing authority and District Committee/Board of World Church Extension.

B. MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY:

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ARTICLE III
DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS AND RITES

A. DOCTRINE: Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Christian Church in every age and in every land.

Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene.

We believe:

1. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God, - our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit, - God as our Sustainer.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus...the Christ...historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

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